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LAW OF THE SEA

Letter dated 21 September 1992 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter dated 9 September 1992 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations (A/47/430), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, upon the instruction of my Government, the full text of the note dated 8 September 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam concerning the activities of the Chinese oil-drilling ship Nanhai-6 in the sea area of the Beibu Gulf under Chinese jurisdiction (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 32.

(Signed) LI Daoyu
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Note dated 8 September 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and, with reference to the notes dated 3 and 4 September 1992, has the honour to reply as follows:

The operational area of the Chinese oil-drilling ship Nanhai-6 is on the Chinese side of the central line of the Beibu Gulf, an area under Chinese jurisdiction. In the notes, the Vietnamese side claimed that this area is in Vietnamese waters. This is not true and unacceptable to the Chinese side. The Chinese Government once suggested, in January 1974, to the Vietnamese side that before the demarcation of the Beibu Gulf waters the two sides refrain from exploratory activities in the central area, between longitude 107° and 108° E and latitude 18° to 20° N. While this suggestion from the Chinese side remains unaccepted, the Vietnamese side has in recent years carved parts of the above-mentioned area for joint ventures with other countries, signed oil exploration contracts with foreign companies and carried out drilling activities. Only after the Vietnamese side took the above actions did the Chinese side start exploratory activities on the Chinese side of the central line of the Beibu Gulf. The drilling activity of the Chinese drilling ship, started on 4 September, is the continuation of the drilling work started in June 1991. It is not a new action.

The Chinese Government reiterates that the Chinese side is willing to settle through negotiations the question of how to demarcate the Beibu Gulf waters and wishes that the Vietnamese side will make an active response so as to solve, at an early date, the dispute over the Beibu Gulf in a fair and reasonable manner. Before the settlement of the dispute, the two sides can hold talks on refraining from entering the above central area for new exploratory activities by either side.